DR. CHIRAG GUPTA | UROLOGY & ANDROLOGY

# Percutaneous Epididymal Sperm Aspiration (PESA)

Patient guide | Sperm retrieval procedures

**Use this guide to prepare questions for your urologist. Your individual plan may differ.**

## What it is

PESA uses a fine needle passed through the scrotal skin to collect fluid from the epididymis, where sperm mature and are stored.

## When it may be considered

PESA may be considered when sperm are being produced but a blockage prevents them from reaching the ejaculate, such as in some cases of obstructive azoospermia. The epididymis or testicle may be selected as the source based on the suspected cause, examination findings, fertility plan and clinician experience.

## What happens

After the planned anaesthetic or numbing medicine, the clinician guides a fine needle into the epididymis and aspirates fluid. A laboratory checks the sample for sperm. If enough suitable sperm are found, they may be used for ICSI or frozen when appropriate. If sperm are not found or the sample is not adequate, the team may discuss another retrieval method or a separate plan.

## Preparing for the procedure

Tell the team about medicines, allergies, bleeding problems, prior scrotal or fertility procedures and any infection symptoms. Ask about fasting, anaesthesia, transport home, fresh versus frozen sperm, and how this procedure will coordinate with the fertility laboratory. Follow your care team’s instructions.

## Recovery and possible risks

PESA is performed through the skin, but soreness, bruising, bleeding or swelling can still occur. Infection, injury to nearby structures, failure to find usable sperm or needing another procedure are possible. Your clinician will explain wound care, activity limits and when to contact the clinic.

## Questions to discuss

Is an epididymal source appropriate for my diagnosis? What are the alternatives if PESA does not retrieve sperm? Can the sample be frozen? What recovery instructions should I follow?

## Sources for further reading

• Urology Care Foundation - Sperm Retrieval
• AUA/ASRM Guideline - Male Infertility, Part II

General educational information only; it is not a diagnosis or a substitute for advice from your treating clinician. Follow instructions specific to you.